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The Buke of the Howlat.

The Buke of the Howlat.

By Holland.



Printed at Edinburgh.
MDCCCXXIII.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA ·

THIS EDITION OF

THE BUKE OF THE HOWLAT

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

AND PRESENTED

TO THE PRESIDENT

AND MEMBERS

Of the Bannatyne Club

BY THEIR FAITHFULL SERVANT

DAVID LAING.

October 23, 1823.

THE BANNATYNE CLVB,

FEBRUARY MDCCCXXIII.

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25TH NOVEMBER, 1823.

THE EARL OF MINTO,
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THE PREFACE.

The allegorical Poem of the Howlat was composed about the middle of the fifteenth century. Although it has been regarded by criticks, and certainly without much injustice, as a prolix and very uncouth performance, still it is by no means to be considered as wholly destitute of claims to attention. The forced style of alliteration adopted by the author, has, it is true, imparted to his work a certain degree of obscurity, whilst the singular want of propriety shewn in the construction of the fable may likewise, in some measure, contribute to render it less attractive:—yet, after all, as it serves to fill up a chasm in the history of our poetical literature, the reader's curiosity may be excited, if we attempt to throw

some light on the dark veil of allegory under which its primary argument is usually supposed to be concealed.

The Poem itself comes to us in the form of a moral fable, illustrative of the danger of pride; but an idea has been started by an ingenious writer, that, under this ostensible character, there lay concealed an invective against the person and government of James the Second of Scotland. "The length and nature of this Poem," says Mr Pinkerton, "founded on a trite fable, and the long panegyrick on the House of Douglas, convinced me that 'more was meant than meets the ear;' and the lines (in Stanza LXXVI.)

> 'We cum pure, we gang pure, bath KING and Comon;
> Bot THOW rewll THE richtouss, THY CROWNE sall ourere,'

certify the idea that the Howlat is no other than the King James II.—a prince little deserving such a satire."[1]

Such a hypothesis may be thought too plausible to be entirely rejected; yet, if such a design did really exist, it was probably nothing more than a subordinate object of the author. But even this admission may perhaps ap-

[1] Pinkerton's Scotish Poems, &c. Vol. I. p. xxix. The reader will observe, that the reading of *thy crowne* in these lines is not warranted by either of the old manuscript copies.

pear too great to an attentive reader of the poem,—which is dated from Ternoway, the seat of the Earls of Moray; and which we are told was composed to please the Countess of Moray, *dowit* or wedded to a Douglas:—

> "Thus for ane Dow of Dunbar drew I this dyte,
> Dowit with ane Dowglas, and baith war thai dowis."[2]

The lady here meant is Mary Dunbar, who, in or before the year 1447, brought that Earldom to her husband, Archibald Douglas, third son of James, seventh Earl of Douglas.—But in order more fully to comprehend the tendency of the fable, as well as to fix the precise time when it was written, it will be necessary to advert in a more particular manner to the History of the *old Douglas days*.

Subsequent to the period when the reins of government were assumed by James II., that house, already the most potent in the kingdom, had received a great accession of power through the influence which William, eighth Earl of Douglas, possessed over the councils and affections of the youthful monarch. By his means, the younger branches of the family were raised to considerable dignities: for, as the excellent old historian of their race

[2] Stanza LXXVII. lines 1 and 2.

says of him, " he was as kind and forward to advance his friends, as he had been to quell his enemies." One of his brothers, Hugh, was created Earl of Ormond; another of them, John, received the title of Lord of Balveny; whilst a third, Archibald, as already has been mentioned, obtained in marriage the daughter of James Dunbar, Earl of Moray, who had died without male issue; by which alliance, he procured the right and title to that earldom. This, it may be added, he obtained through his brother's influence, to the prejudice of James, second Lord Crichton, who, previous to the father's death, had been espoused to the elder daughter. But soon after the marriage of James II. with Mary of Gueldres, in 1449, the favour and power of Douglas began sensibly to fail; till at length, partly in consequence of repeated acts of tyranny and oppression, joined to the representations of his enemies during his absence abroad, the King's affections were entirely alienated from him; and it was deemed prudent to endeavour, by all possible means, to curb his exorbitant power and influence. This object was conceived to be the more urgent, inasmuch as the confederacy which Douglas had entered into with the Earls of Crawford, Ross, and some other of the Scottish nobles, for their mutual protection, was sufficient to alarm the monarch for his own safety, and the security

of the kingdom.—But the fate of the Earl of Douglas, who, in February 1452, was stabbed by the King's own hand, is well known, and need hardly be recapitulated.[3]

William was succeeded in the earldom by his second brother, Sir James, Master of Douglas, who had been educated for the church; and who, along with the Earl of Ormond, and several other friends and relatives, had accompanied Douglas to the town of Stirling. They immediately rose up in arms to revenge such an atrocious act; and, in contempt of the royal authority, they dragged the safe-conduct which Douglas had received, through the streets, '*at the tail of an ill-favoured spittle-jade, or mare;*' speaking '*richt sclanderfully*' of the

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[3] On the Monday before Fastrens-even, 21st February, Douglas having received a safe-conduct under the Great Seal, subscribed by all the Lords who at that time were with the King, by which they pledged themselves, "that *suppos the King wald brek the band forsaid, that thai suld let it at thair power,*" he was prevailed on to visit the Court, then held at the Castle of Stirling. "And this samyn Monunday, (in the words of a contemporaneous writer,) he passit to the castell, and spak with the King, that tuke richt wele with him be apperans, and callit him on the morne to the dyner and to the supper, and he come and dynit and sowpit. And thai said, thar was a band betwix the said Erll of Dowglas, and the Erll of Ros, and the Erll of Craufurd. And efter supper, at sevyne houris, the King then beand in the inner chalmer and the said erll, he chargit him to breke the forsaid band. He said he mycht nocht, nor wald nocht. Than the King said, Fals tratour, sen yow will nocht I sall, and stert sodanly till him with ane knyf, and straik him in at the coler, and down in the body. And thai sayd that Pa-

King, and all that were implicated in the Earl's death. After this, having collected their force, they burnt the town of Stirling, and continued to excite great commotions in the southern parts of Scotland:—but at length James—who had most anxiously endeavoured, in a Parliament convened for the express object, to vindicate himself from the charge of treachery, and the violation of publick faith,—partly by strenuous as well as lenient measures, succeeded in inducing them to return to their allegiance.[4]

There seems but little reason to doubt that the HOWLAT was composed in the course of the year 1453, during this interval of reconciliation. The author, in a long digression, gives a particular description of the *green-tree* of Douglas, with its armorial bearings; and the manner in which he speaks of its *four branches*, shews that he certainly means James, ninth Earl of

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trik Gray straik him nixt the King, with ane poll ax on the hed, and straik out his harnes. And syne the gentillis that war with the King, gaf thaim ilkane a straik or twa with knyffis."—*Chronicle of James II. King of Scots*, 4to, p. 46. —Published from Asloan's Manuscript by Thomas Thomson, Esq.

The reader may compare this account with the narrative of the excellent old historian of the family, David Hume of Godscroft, whose work ought to be familiar to every one who feels interested in the ancient annals of our country.

[4] Pinkerton's History, vol. I. p. 220.

Douglas, and his three brothers, Archibald, Earl of Moray; Hugh, Earl of Ormond; and John, Lord of Balveny, who are, indeed, specially mentioned by name. —From this circumstance, it is evident, that, had the composition of the poem taken place immediately subsequent to the death of Earl William in 1452, we might at least have expected to find some allusion to an event which struck at the very root of all the grandeur and power of that house. The mere representation of the King, under the degrading form of an owl, complaining to the other birds of his deformity, would, at that time, be altogether insufficient to express the sentiments which the adherents of Douglas entertained of their Monarch; although it might well enough serve to dimly shadow forth their feelings, when more caution and reserve, on their part, was necessary in any allusion to the King's person. But however this may be, no possible doubt can be entertained but that the Howlat must be dated previous, at least, to the battle of Arkinholm, in Dumfries-shire, which took place in May 1455: for, on that occasion, the Douglases having again appeared in open rebellion, Archibald, Earl of Moray, husband of the lady to whom the poem is addressed, was slain; and his brother, Hugh, Earl of Ormond, taken prisoner and executed. In the following month, the

whole family of Douglas was attainted, and forced into exile. Well might Lyndsay, alluding to their fate, exclaim,

> "Quhare bene the douchtie Erlis of Dowglas,
> Quhilkis royallie, into this regioun rang?
> Forfalt and slane! quhat neidith mair process,
> Dame Curia thame dulfullie down thrang."[5]

Of the personal history of the author, whose name was HOLLAND, no kind of information has been discovered. We are even left in ignorance of his christian name; but the poem carries with it the most convincing proof that he was a strenuous adherent of the noble and powerful family of Douglas. The sirname of HOLLAND is, however, so uncommon, and the coincidence of situation and attachment so remarkable, as almost to place it beyond suspicion that the author of the HOWLAT may have been the SIR RICHARD HOLLAND, whose name occurs in an Act of Parliament, March 1482; in which a reward is offered for the apprehension of those *cummyn of gentill blude,*

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[5] Lyndsay's Works, vol. 1. p. 319. "Dame Curia," says Mr Chalmers, "is an allegorical personage of Lyndsay's creation; and frequently brought forward by him. She guided the destinies of the court, and is frequently employed in hurling down courtiers from their eminence."

who were followers of the exiled Earl of Douglas.[6] But from the manner in which our author is mentioned by Dunbar, and by Sir David Lyndsay, along with the other Scotish *makars*, or poets, whom they commemorate, we may readily infer, that he was esteemed as a writer of some distinction; and Lyndsay, who connects his name with those of Merser, Henryson, and three other of their contemporaries, says with emphasis:—

> "Thocht they be deid, thair libellis bene livand,
> Quhilkis to reherse, makis reidaris to rejoise."

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[6] This is an act "for resisting and staynching of the tressoun of the traitour, James of Douglace, quhilk is now cummyng to the bordouris." Besides the reward offered, as above-mentioned, there is a free remission to others who should forsake Douglas and come over to the King; but from this act of grace, Holland is specially excepted. This clause of the act is in the following words:—

"Except the personis that pleses his hienes to except, That is to say, the tratouris, Jamis of Douglace, Alexander Jarding, Schir Richard Holland, and Maister Patrick Halyburton, priestis, and vther sic like tratouris that ar sworne Inglismen, and remanys in Ingland,"—*Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, vol. II. p. 139.

From this we learn, (supposing the person named to be our author,) that he was a priest, to whom the title of Schir in those days was given, and from whence originated the usual designation of their being the Pope's Knights. Thus Lyndsay says,

> "The pure priest thinkis he gettis na richt,
> Be he nocht stilit like an knicht,
> And callit *Schir*, before his name;
> As Schir Thomas, and Schir Williame."

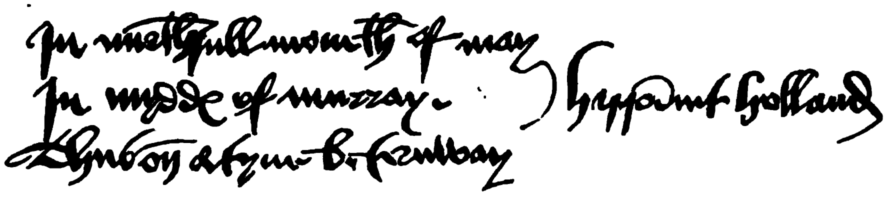
No other of HOLLAND'S *libellis*, or writings, has reached our times, except the HOWLAT, which was first printed in the year 1792,[7] from the copy preserved in Bannatyne's Manuscript, (written in 1568;) but the editor appears to have been singularly unfortunate in a transcriber; numerous passages which were of themselves sufficiently obscure, having been rendered absolutely unintelligible. The text of the present edition is taken from a transcript made some years ago, but since, very carefully collated with the more ancient copy, contained in a valuable manuscript, in the Auchinleck Library, which appears to have been compiled in the earlier part of the sixteenth century, (about the year 1515,) by one John Asloan, or Sloane; and which, in every respect, in so far as the HOWLAT is concerned, is indisputably superior to the other. The various readings afforded by a careful collation of these two manuscripts, (the only copies known to be extant,) are not of much importance; but such of them as seemed worth noticing, will be found in the Appendix, together with a few Notes, illustrative of the poem.

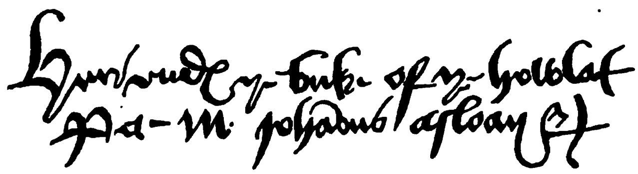
As the reader may be gratified to see a facsimile of the ancient manuscript, which has been followed, a few

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7 In the Appendix subjoined to Pinkerton's Collection of *Scotish Poems, reprinted from scarce editions*. London, 1792, 3 vols. post 8vo.

lines are accordingly given from the end of the poem, to which is subjoined, the autograph of the transcriber.[8]





It may be proper, however, before expressing any sentiments as to the poetical merit of the Howlat, to give a brief summary of the fable,[9] for the benefit of those readers who may not be very conversant with writings so

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[8] This, as well as the other ornaments in the volume, were executed by Mr Lizars; that on the title-page being taken from a very clever design by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., for which, and for many similar favours, I owe my best and most grateful acknowledgments.

[9] In the following summary, much unnecessary trouble has been saved, in availing myself of an elaborate analysis of this poem, by the late Alexander Thomson, Esq.—kindly communicated to me by Dr Robert Anderson, from the collections of his lamented friend, which were intended for a History of Scotish Poetry; but in which no considerable progress seems to have been made.

antiquated and obscure. They will, by this means, be better enabled to judge for themselves respecting the notions which some people have entertained of its satirical tendency; particularly, should any onè, anxious to vindicate the character of the Scottish Monarch, propose the question,

"Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?"

The poet walks out at the *soft season* of the year, and, sitting down by the side of a river, (of the pleasures of which place, he declines giving any particular description, in order to avoid prolixity, having, as he says, *mekle matter in meter to gloss*)—he hears a piteous lamentation, uttered by an owl in a holly tree, who was looking with horror at his own visage in the water. The Owl resolves to appeal to the Pope of Birds, in the hopes, that, through the prayers and intercession of his holiness, Dame Nature may be prevailed upon to alter his appearance, and to *schape him a schand bird.* Accordingly, he comes to the Peacock, who is Pope, and falling reverently on his knees, receives his *braid benesoun* or bene-

diction. The Pope having heard his complaint, and considering it a weighty affair, directs his secretary, the Turtle, to summon a general council; and the Swallow, as both herald and messenger, is dispatched on this errand. The different birds belonging to the Spiritual estate assemble, and the ecclesiastical dignities allotted to each of them are described. The council proceeds to deliberate on the case; but a variety of opinions being expressed, it is thought preferable to defer coming to any decision, until the concurrence of the State Temporal is obtained. The Swallow is again sent off with letters, and finds the Eagle, or Emperor, in the Tower of Babylon, who graciously receives the message, and summoning his train of attendants, immediately sets out with them on their journey. They speedily arrive in Europe, and reach the forest in which the general convocation is held. The Emperor's attendants are then enumerated by the poet, among whom we find the Woodpecker, as pursuivant, bearing his arms, and those of the King of France, and the King of Scotland. Next to the arms of Scotland, are those of the Douglasses, who are designated by our author as the *weir-wall*, or bulwark of their country; and, it is easy to see by the manner in which he speaks of them, the strength of his attachment to that family. The stanzas descriptive of their noble an-

cestor, who was chosen by Robert the Bruce, when on his death-bed, to carry his heart to the Holy Land, are very animated. After this romantick episode, he proceeds to describe the blazons of the other branches of the family; but with all his minuteness, the author is afraid he has not said enough; and more than once refers the readers to professed heralds, *to tell them the haill.*

Returning then to the fable, the temporal birds are welcomed by the Prelates, and kindly invited to dinner by the Pope. They are arranged at table by the Falcon, who is marshall: the Stork being appointed steward during flesh-time; and the Soland-Goose during the season of Lent, for this special reason, that from the firmament he could *fang the fische deid.* In the midst of the banquet, the Thrush, and some other birds, as minstrels, enter, and sing a hymn to the Virgin Mary; which is followed by a curious list of musical instruments. The Jay, in the capacity of a juggler, is next introduced, who exhibits several wonderful exploits. He is succeeded by the Rook, in the character of a bard from Ireland, who begins to repeat an absurd rhapsody of the genealogy of the Irish Kings; for which, and some other of his falsehoods, he is sharply rebuked. But his continued insolence and loquacity is checked by the entrance of the Lapwing and the Cuckoo, as two *flyrand* fools, who seize

on him, and pull him by the hair, and defile him so, that, to use the author's expressive words,

"The bard smaddit lyke a smaik smorit in a smedy."

After which, the two fools, to the great amusement of the company, fall by the ears, and abuse each other.—At length the council proceed to business, and the request contained in the Owl's petition is readily granted. They offer up their prayers to Dame Nature, who descends, and, willingly acceding to their united desires, bids each of the birds lend the Owl one of its feathers, which she engages to join together before her departure. This being done, the fortunate petitioner is suddenly changed from his despised shape, and becomes the fairest bird in all Scotland; the transition, however, having the effect also of changing his behaviour to extreme haughtiness and arrogance, which at length become so intolerable, that the birds apply again to Nature for redress. She grants it, with the same condescension as formerly; and the Owl, thus despoiled of all his borrowed plumage, and reduced to his original despised and deformed condition, gives vent to his feelings in several excellent moral reflections on the dangerous effects of pride. The author concludes with mentioning the cause of his writing

the poem, and the place where the adventure is said to have occurred.

Such is a brief outline of this fable, of the poetical merits of which, there can be but one opinion.[10] Although

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[10] The following is the opinion of an ingenious writer, already named, with regard to Holland's merits as a poet:—

"To the character of an original inventor," Mr Thomson says, "the author of the *Houlate* has but a slender claim; for besides having taken the story of his poem from the fable of the Jackdaw with borrowed feathers, he is indebted to *Chaucer's Assemble of Foules*, for some of its principal decorations. The catalogue of birds, and the personification of Nature, are, both of them, imitations of *Chaucer;* but the former is inferior, in every respect, to the characteristic sketches of his master; and the latter is so little suited to the situation in which it stands, as clearly shews it to have been an exotic, transplanted from a much more poetical soil.

"*Drayton* has a poem entitled the *Owl;* but there is no similarity between it and the *Houlate*, either in the subject, or the manner of treating it. But the want of propriety in this poem is a blemish still greater than that of originality. Nothing in composition can be more absurd, than the custom of investing birds and beasts with dignities ecclesiastical and civil; and putting dialogues into their mouths, upon moral, religious, or political topics. Perhaps, however, the candid reader may be inclined to think this more excusable in a writer of the fifteenth century, when he recollects that the very same impropriety was committed by the author of the *Hind* and *Panther*, almost at the close of the seventeenth.

"The adoption of *Mr Pinkerton's* hypothesis would furnish us with a still more striking coincidence (or rather contrast) between *Holland* and *Dryden*. The intention of the former in writing the *Houlate*, was to depreciate *James* II. of *Scotland:* to extoll *James* II. of *England*, and recommend his religion, was that of the latter. But the discovery of this allegorical meaning gives no fresh merit to the *Scottish* poem, as the satire in the one is equally unjust, and equally culpable, with the panegyric in the other."—*MS. Critique on the Howlat*, p. 16, &c.

the details are occasionally amusing, it is still confessedly a dull performance, exhibiting, neither in conception nor execution, any extraordinary degree of poetical talent. But dull as the poem generally may be, there is a redeeming beauty in the episode of James, Lord of Douglas; and it might be difficult to point out any similar passage in our old poetical writers, in which animated description is combined with so much tenderness and feeling. Moreover, the poem is remarkable for its language, no less than for its versification, in the structure of which, it bears a marked resemblance to some of the more ancient of our metrical romances; although the style is neither so difficult nor so obscure as that of Golagrus and Gawane, or of Raulf Coilyear, the romances more especially alluded to. If, after what has been stated, any reader is inclined to believe that this poem contains a covert satire on James II., with regard to his ambitious dispositions, he must at least concede, that the satire is not of the most pungent and caustick nature. But such a notion really derives little, if any, support from the poem itself, in which we can find no direct allusions either to the personal character of the King, or to the state of Scotland in his reign; nor does the situation of James, at any period of his life, accord with that implied by the adoption of such an hypothe-

sis. Besides, the idea of the author's having made use of an allegorical fable for any such purpose, might be controverted on the grounds, that at that early period our writers had not resorted to such a mode of composition: they had, in fact, no experience of the power and extensive influence of political satire, which belongs to a much more advanced and polished state of society. On the whole, we mayconclude with observing, that the author has displayed considerable ingenuity and descriptive power, and has preserved several curious sketches of the manners of the time; and that although the poem of THE HOWLAT is in some measure obscured by the unfortunate preference which has been given to the alliterative style that prevailed so much in our ancient poetical literature, it must nevertheless be always regarded as one of the most singularly curious productions of the age to which it belongs.

EDINBURGH, *October* 1823.

SINCE the foregoing Preface was written, the Editor has been kindly favoured with the following communication from SIR WALTER SCOTT, which he is happy to have it in his power to present to the reader; and which probably will satisfy most people on the point at issue:—

"After the opinions entertained and expressed on the subject by great antiquaries, it may seem bold to doubt whether the HOWLAT contains any political allusion either to James II., or to the state of Scotland; or, indeed, whether it means any thing more than a mere apologue, with such a fanciful adaptation of the characteristicks and peculiarities of the various tribes of birds to the classes of mankind, as has been made in our own time in the witty and ingenious poem called "The Peacock at Home,"—the authoress of which, we will venture to say, never heard of Sir Richard Holland, or read a word of his HOWLAT, though the pieces bear a singular resemblance to each other. Another satire of the same kind appeared at Paris, about the beginning of the Revolution, in which the various orders of Catholic clergy are ludicrously classified, as birds, according to the system of Linnæus.

"The strong argument by which alone the general opinion has been hitherto supported, is, that the author, an avowed friend and eulogist of the great House of Douglas, must necessarily be an enemy of the reigning family, and willing to depress or insult the character of James II., as the enemy of his friends and patrons. To this we allow its full weight; and if we could find in the piece, from beginning to end, any thing peculiarly allusive to the person of James II., or the events of his reign, we are ready to admit, that, arguing *a priori*, we should be apt to recognize such allusion as a libel on that prince, and as being a very natural appendage or corollary to a panegyric on the House of Douglas. If the poem had satirized pride or violence in oppression and abusion of power, as such faults would have corresponded with the charges which the Douglas faction had brought against the King: Or, suppose that James had been a Polish monarch, called to the throne by the suffrages of the nobles over whom he is afterwards accused of tyrannizing, the parable of the Howlat in his borrowed feathers would have been applicable, and the catastrophe of the apologue would have conveyed a striking inuendo. But James II. came to a hereditary throne in the ordinary course of succession; and owed his sovereignty neither to the compassion and patronage of the "Pape," nor to

any special surrender of privileges on the part of the nobles. His authority was native to him, and he held the kingdom on the same terms on which his nobles held their estates, as the lawful owner of the throne of his ancestors. Indeed, it is particularly worthy of notice, that when the author mentions the King of Scotland distinctly, and by name, it is in his character of an independent and hereditary sovereign, giving the lie to his own satire, if we are to understand that he elsewhere likened James II. to the Owl in borrowed feathers.

> ' Our soverane of Scotland,
> Quhilk sall be lord and ledar—
> Our braid Britaine all quhar,
> As Sanct Margaretis air.'

If it be alleged that this description is introduced merely as a device to conceal his satire, and screen the author from consequences, it may be replied, *First*, That in or about the year 1453, a friend of the House of Douglas, writing in the forest of Ternoway, at a time when general publication was out of the question, would probably have had little cause to dread the vengeance of his Sovereign. *Secondly*, That unless there be points of satirical resemblance which the lapse of ages may have obscured, it would never answer the purpose of a satirist to cover his

meaning so entirely, that when his production is read from one end to the other, no point of resemblance occurs between his libel and its object, which might not be equally applicable to any King and people of the period. It would be idle to express a positive opinion on a subject obscured by the mist of so many ages; but until some coincidence is shewn, stronger than any which we are able to perceive betwixt the fable of the Howlat and the History of James II., we cannot but think it equally probable, that instead of writing a satire, HOLLAND amused his leisure at Ternoway by compiling a poetical apologue, upon a plan used not only by Chaucer, but by many of the French minstrels, without any view whatever to local or national politics. The praises of the Douglasses are introduced in an inartificial manner; but such digressions are not uncommon in the authors of a rude age. The hymn to the virgin (Stanza LVI.) is just such an effusion of episodical devotion, as the panegyric on the Douglasses is a burst of friendly enthusiasm. Nay, the very circumstance, that they are brought forward without parable, or without disguise, seems to make against the opinion that there is a political allegory in the rest of the poem Had the Douglas been introduced as the eagle or falcon, there would have been better reason to suppose that the King was sketched under the cha-

racter of the Howlat. On the whole, judging from the tenor of the poem and all that we know of the history of the period, we can only sum up with the remark, that if HOLLAND be actually a satirist, he has been one of the most cautious that ever wrote verse, since it is so hard to discover in what his satire consists; or, in other words, he has hidden his meaning so completely, that it is impossible for a modern author distinctly to apprehend it."

THE following passage from Henry the old Scotish Minstrel,—the most romantick of all our ancient writers, had escaped my recollection when I was engaged in drawing up the foregoing preface; but it is not too late to be brought forward as a corroborative proof of what is so clearly and satisfactorily stated in the above communication. There is to be found in it a most distinct reference to the poem of the HOWLAT, which is regarded as nothing more than a moral fable. This is the more curious, as it is contained in a work supposed to have been written about the year 1470, by one, who, if not personally acquainted with our author, was at least his contemporary. The lines occur in that part of the

minstrel's narrative, where he describes the contention which took place before the battle of Falkirk, when Sir William Wallace refused to yield up his accustomed post of honour, at the time that Stewart of Bute insisted on leading the vanguard of the army. Stewart upon this upbraids Wallace for pride, and addressing our valourous and immortal champion, says, "by thee I tell a tale."

> "'Say furth,' quoth he, 'off the farrest yhe can.'
> Wnhappyly his taill thus he began:—
> 'Wallace,' he said, 'thow takis the mekill cur;
> So FERYT IT, BE WYRKYNG OFF NATUR,
> HOW A HOWLAT COMPLEND OF HIS FETHERAME,
> QUHILL DEYM NATUR TUK OFF ILK BYRD, BUT BLAME,
> A FAYR FETHYR, AND TO THE HOWLAT GAIFF;
> THAN HE THROUCH PRYD REBOYTYT ALL THE LAYFF.
> Quhar off suld thow thi senyhe schaw so he?
> Thow thinkis nan her at suld thi falow be.
> This makis it, thow art cled with our men,
> Had we our awin, thin war bot few to ken.'
>
> At thir wordis gud Wallace brynt as fyr:
> Our haistely he ansuerd him in ire,
> 'Thow leid,' he said, 'the suth full oft has ben,
> Thar, and I baid, quhar thow durst nocht be seyn
> Contrar enemys, na mar, for Scotlandis rycht
> Than dar the HOWLAT quhen that the day is brycht.'"

WALLACE,—BY HENRY THE MINSTREL.—*Buke* X. 130, *&c.*

The Buke of the Howlat.

Heir begynnis
The Buke of the Howlat.

I.

IN the myddis of May, at morne, as I went,
Throwe myrth markit on mold, till a grene meid,
The bemes blythest of ble fro the son blent,
That all brichtnyt about the bordouris on breid :
With alkyn herbes of air that war in erd lent
The feldis flurist, and fret full of fairhed ;
So soft was the sessoun our Souerane dovne sent,
Throw the greable gift of his Godhed,
That all was amyable owr the air and the erd :
Thus, throw thir cliftis so cleir,
Withoutin fallowe or feir,
I raikit till ane Reveir,   That ryally apperd.

II.

This riche Revir dovn ran, but resting or ruf,
Throwe ane forest on fold, that farly was fair;
All the brayis of the brym bair branchis abuf,
And birdis blythest of ble, on blossomes bair;
The land lowne was and le, with lyking and luf,
And for to lende by that laike, thocht me levar,
Becaus that thir hartes in heirdis couth huf,
Pransand and prunȝeand, be pair and be pair:
Thus sat I in solace, sekerly and sure,
Content of the fair firth,
Mekle mair of the mirth,
Als blyth of the birth   That the ground bure.

III.

The birth that the ground bure was browdin on breidis,
With girs gaye as the gold, and granes of grace,
Mendis and medicyne for mennis all neidis;
Helpe to hert, and to hurt, heilfull it was.
Undir the Cirkill solar thir sauorus seidis
War nurist be dame Natur, that noble mastres;
Bot all thar names to nevyn as now, it nocht neid is,
It war prolixt and lang, and lenthing of space,
And I haue mekle matir in metir to glos,
Of ane nothir sentence
And waike is my eloquence;
Tharfor in haist will I hens   To the purpos.

IV.

Off that purpos in the place, be pryme of the day,
I herd ane petuos appele, with ane pur mane,
Solpit in sorowe, that sadly couth say,
Wa is me, wretche in this warld, wilsome of wane,
With mair murnyng in mynd than I meyne may,
Rolpit reuthfully roth in a rude rane;
Of that ferly on fold, I fell in affray,
Nirar that noys in neſt I nechit in ane
I sawe ane Howlat, in haist, vndir ane holyne,
Lukand the laike throwe,
And saw his awne schadowe,
At the quhilk he couth growe, And maid gowlyne.

V.

He grat grysly grym, and gaif a gret ȝowle,
Cheuerand and chydand with churliche cheir:
Quhy is my fax, quoth the fyle, fassonit so foule,
My forme and my fetherem, vnfrely, but feir;
My neb is netherit as a nok, I am bot ane Owle;
Aganis natur in the nicht, I walk in to weir;
I dare do nocht on the day, bot droupe as a dowle,
Nocht for schame of my schape in pert till appeir:
Thus all thir fowlis, for my filth, has me at feid,
That be I seyne in thar sicht,
To luke out on day licht,
Sum will me dulfully dicht, Sum dyng me to deid.

VI.

Sum bird will bay at my beike, and some will me byte,
Sum skripe me with scorne, sum skrym at myn e;
I se be my schadowe my schape has the wyte:
Quhom sall I blame in this breth, a bysyn that I be,
Is nane bot dame Natur I bid nocht to nyte,
Till 'accuse' of this caise, in case that I de;
Bot quha sall mak me ane mendis of hir worth a myte,
That thus has maid on the mold ane monstour of me:
I will appele to the Pape, and pas till him plane;
For happin that his halynace,
Throw prayer may purchace,
To reforme my foule face, And than war I fane.

VII.

Fayne wald I wyte, quoth the fyle, or I furth fure,
Quha is fader of all foule, pastour and pape;
That is the plesant Pacok, precious and pure,
Constant and kirklyk under his cler cape,
Myterit, as the maner is, manswet and mure,
Schroude in his schene weid, schand in his schap,
Sad in his sanctitud, sekerly and sure,
I will go to that gud, his grace for to grap.
Of that bourde I was blythe and bade to behald,
The Howlet wylest in wyce,
Raikit under the rys,
To the Pacoke of pryce, That was Pape cald.

VIII.

Before the Pape, quhen the pur present him had,
With sic courtassy as he couth, on kneis he fell;
Said Aue Raby, be the rud I am richt rad
For to behald zour halynes, or my tale tell;
I may nocht suffys to se zour sanctitud sad.
The Pape wyslie I wis, of worschipe the well,
Gaif him his braid benesoun, and baldly him bad,
That he suld spedely speike and spair nocht to spell.
I come to speir, quoth the spreit, in to speciall,
Quhy I am formed so fowle,
Ay to zowt and to zowle,
As an horrible Owle, Wgsum our all.

IX.

I am netherit ane Owll thus be Natur,
Lykar a fule than a fowle in figur and face;
Bysyn of all birdis that euer body bure,
Withoutin caus or crym, kend in this case:
I haue appelit to zour presence, precious and pur,
Askis helpe in till haist at zour halynes,
That ze wald cry apon Crist, that all has in cur,
To schape me a schand bird in a schort space;
And till accus Natur, this is no nay;
Thus, throw zour halynes, may ze
Make a fair foule of me,
Or elles dredles I de Or myne end day.

X.

Off thi deid, quoth the Pape, pite I haife,
Bot apon Natur to pleyne, it is perrell;
I can nocht say sudanelye, so me Crist saif,
Bot I sall call my cardinallis and my counsall,
Patriarkis and prophetis of lerit the laif;
Thay salbe semblit full sone, that thow se sall.
He callit on his cubicular within his conclaif,
That was the proper Pape Jaye provde in his apparale;
Bad send for his secretar, and his sele sone,
That was the Turtour trewest,
Ferme, faithfull, and fast,
That bure that office honest, And enterit but hone.

XI.

The Pape commandit but hone, to wryte in all landis,
Be the said secretar, that the sele ȝempt,
For all statis of kirk that wnder Crist standis,
To semble to his summondis, as it wele sempt.
The trewe Turtour has tane with the tythandis,
Done dewlie his det, as the deir dempt;
Syne belyf send the letteris in to seir landis
With the Swallowe, so swyft in special exprenit
The Papis harrald, at poynt in to present,
For he is forthwart to fle,
And ay will haue entre,
In hous and in hall hie, To tell his entent.

XII.

Quhat suld I tell ony mair of thir materis,
Bot thir lordis belyf the letteris has tane,
Resauit thaim with reuerence, to reid as efferis;
And richely the harraldis rewardit ilkane,
Than busk thaj but blyn, mony bewschyris,
Grathis tham but gruching that gait for to gane,
All the statis of the kirk out of steid steris,
And I sall not zow richt now thar names in ane,
How thai apperit to the Pape, and present thaim aye
Fair farrand and fre,
In a gudly degre,
And manlyke as thocht me, In myddis of May.

XIII.

All thus in May, as I ment, in a mornyng,
Come four Fasandis full fair in the first front,
Present tham as patriarkis in thar appering,
Benyng of obedience, and blyth in the bront:
A college of cardinalis come syne in a lyng,
That war Crannis of kynd, gif I richt compt;
With red hattis on hed, in haile takynning
Off that deir dignite, with worschipe ay wont:
Thir ar fowlis of effect, but fellony or feid,
Spirituale in all thing,
Leile in thar leving,
Tharfor in dignite digne, Thay dure to thar deid.

XII.

Ȝit enduerand the daye to that deir drewe,
Swannis suowchand full swyth, swetest of swar,
In quhyte rocatis arrayd; as I richt knewe
That thaj war bischopis blist, I was the blythar;
Stable and steidfast, tender and trewe,
Off fewe wordis, full wys, and worthy thaj war:
Thar was Pyotis, and Partrikis, and Pluwaris ynewe,
As abbotis of all ordouris that honorable ar;
The Se Mawis war monkis, the blak and the quhyte,
The Goule was a gryntar,
The Suerthbak a sellerar,
The Scarth a fische fangar, And that a perfyte.

XIII.

Parfytlye thir Pikmawis, as for priouris,
With thar party habitis present tham thar;
Heronnis contemplatif, clene charterouris,
With toppit hudis on hed, and clething of hair,
Ay sorowfull and sad at evin sang and houris,
Was neuer leid saw thaim lauch, bot drowpand and dar;
Alkyn chennonis eik of vther ordouris,
All maner of religioun, the less and the mair;
Cryand Crawis and Cais, that cravis the corne,
War pure freris forthward,
That with the leif of the lard,
Will cum to the corne ȝard At ewyn and at morn.

XVI.

Ʒit or ewyn enterit come thai hur office,
Obeyand thir bischoppis, and bydand tham by;
Gret Ganeris on ground, in gudly awys,
That war dempt, but dowt, denys deuchty;
Thaj war residence raith, and airly will ryse
To kepe the college cleine, and the clergye.
The Cok in his cleir cape, that crawis and cryis,
Was chosyn chauntour full cheif in the channonry.
Thar come the Curlewe a clerk, and that full cunnand,
Chargit as chancillar,
For he couth wryte wounder fair,
With his neb for mistar, Apon the se sand.

XVII.

Apon the sand ʒit I sawe, as thesaurer tane,
With grene almous on hed, schir Gawane the Drak;
The archedene, that ourman, ay prechand in plane,
Correker of kirkmen was clepit the Claik.
The Martoune, the Murcoke, the Myresnype in ane,
Lichtit, as lerit men, law by that laike.
The Ravyne, rolpand rudly in a roche ran,
Was dene rurale to reid, rank as a raike;
Quhill the lardnir was laid, held he na hous;
Bot in wplandis townis,
At vicaris and persounis,
For the procuraciounis, Cryand full crows.

XVIII.

The crovs Capone, a clerk vnder cleir weidis,
Full of cherite, chast, and vnchangeable,
Was officiale but les that the law leidis
In caussis consistoriale, that ar coursable.
The Sparrowe Venus he wesit for his vyle deidis,
Lyand in lichory, laith, vnloveable.
The Feldifer in the forest, that febilly him feidis
Be ordour ane hospitular was ordanit full able.
The Cowschotis war personis in thar apparale.
The Dow Noyis messinger,
Rownand aye with his feir,
Was a corate to heir Confessionis hale.

XIX.

Confes cleir can I nocht, nor kyth all the case,
The kynd of thar cummyng, thar companyis eike;
The maner, nor the multitud, so mony thar was:
All Se fowle, and Seid fowle, was nocht for to seik.
Thir ar na fowlis of reif, nor of richnes,
Bot manswelt, but malice, manerit and meike,
And all apperit to the Pape, in that ilk place,
Salust his sanctitud with spirituale speike.
The Pape gaf his benesoun, and blissit thaim all.
Quhen thaj war rangit on rawis
Of thar come, the haile caus
Was said in to schort sawis, As ȝe heir sall.

XX.

The Pape said to the Owle, Propone thin appele,
Thy lamentable langage, as lykis the best.
I am deformed, quoth the fyle, with faltis full feile,
Be Natur netherit ane Owle noyus in nest,
Wreche of all wretchis, fra worschipe and wele;
All this trety has he tald be termes in test:
It neidis nocht to renewe all myn unhele,
Sen it was menit to zour mynd, and maid manifest.
Bot to the poynt petuos he prayit the Pape
To call the clergy with cure,
And se gif that Nature
Mycht reform his figour In a fair schaipe.

XXI.

Than fairlie the fader thir fowlis he franyt
Of thar counsall in this cais, sen the richt thaj knewe;
Gif thaj the Howlat mycht helpe, that was so hard paynit?
And thaj weraly awysit, full of wertewe,
The maner, the mater, and how it remanyt;
The circumstance, and the stait, all couth thaj argewe.
Mony allegiance leile, in leid nocht to layne it,
Off Arestotill, and ald men, scharplie thaj schewe;
The Prelatis thar apperans proponit generale;
Sum said to, and sum fra,
Sum nay, and sum za,
Baith pro and contra Thus argewe thaj all.

XXII.

Thus argewe thai ernistly wounder ofttyis ;
Syne 'to the' sampyn forsuth thai assent haile ;
That sen it nechit Natur, thar alleris maistris,
Thai couth nocht trete but entent of the Temperale.
Tharfor thai counsall the Pape to writ in this wys,
To the Athile emperour, souerane in saile,
To adres to that dyet, to deme his awys,
With dukis, and with digne lordis, darrest in dale,
Erlles of ancestry, and vtharis ynewe.
So that the Spirituale staite,
And the secular consait,
Mycht all gang in a gait Tender and trewe.

XXIII.

The trewe Turtour and traist, as I eir tauld,
Wrait thir letteris at lenth, lelest in leid ;
Syne throw the Papis precept planly thaim zald
To the Swallowe so swyft, harrald in hed,
To ettill to the emperour, of ancestry auld :
He wald nocht spair for to spring on a gud speid :
Fand him in Babilonis towr, with bernis so bald,
Truell kingis with crowne, and dukis but dreid.
He gaf thir lordis belyve the letteris to luke ;
Quhilk the riche emperour,
And all vthar in the hour,
Ressauit with honour, Baith princis and duke.

XXIV.

Quhen thaj consauit had the cais, and the credence,
Be the harrald in hall hove thaj nocht ellis,
Bot bownis out of Babulone with all obediens,
Seikis our the salt se, fro the south sellis,
Enteris in Ewrope, fre but offens,
Walis wyslie the wayis, be woddis and wellis,
Quhill thaj approche to the Pape in his presens,
At the forsaid trist quhar the trete tellis.
Thaj fand him in a forest, frely and fair:
Thai halsit his halynas;
And ȝe sall heir in schort space,
Quhat worthy lordis thar was, Gif ȝour willis war.

XXV.

Thar was the Egill so grym, gretest on ground is,
Athill emperour our all, most awfull in erd.
Ernes ancient of air kingis that crovnd is,
Nixt his celsitud forsuth secoundlie apperd;
Quhilk in the firmament throuch fors of thar flicht foundis,
Persis the sone, with thar sicht selcouth to herd.
Geir Falconnis, that gentilly in bewte haboundis,
War deir dukis, and digne, to deme as efferd.
The Falcone, farest on flicht formed on fold,
Was an erll of honour,
Marschell to the emperour,
Boith in hall and in bowr, Hende to behold.

XXVI.

Gois halkis war governouris of the gret oist,
Chosin chiftanis, chevalrus in charge of weris,
Marchonis in the mapamond, and of mychtis most,
Nixt dukis in dignite, quhom no dreid deris.
Spar halkis, that spedely will compas the cost,
War kene knychtis, of kynd clene of maneris,
Blyth bodyit, and beld, but baret or boist,
With eyne celestiale to se, circulit as saphiris.
The Specht was a pursevant, provde till apper;
That raid befor the emperour,
In a cot 'of' armour,
Of all kynd of colour, Cumly and cleir.

XXVII.

He bure cumly to knawe be connysaunce cleir
Thre crovnis, and a crucifix, all of cler gold;
The burde with orient perle plantit till apper,
Dicht as a dyademe digne, deir to behold,
Circulit on ilk syde with the saphеir,
The jaspis joynit in gem, and rubyis in rold.
Syne twa keyis our croce, of siluer so cleir,
In a feild of asure flammit on fold;
The Papis armes at poynt to blason and beir.
As feris for a persewant,
That will wayage awant;
Actiue and awenant, Armes to weir.

XXVIII.

Syne in a feild of siluer, secoundlie he beris,
Ane Egill ardent of air, that etlis so hie;
The memberis of the samyn foull displait as efferis,
Ferme formyt on fold, ay set for to fle;
All of sable the self, quha the suth leris,
The beke hyppertit breme of that ilk ble:
The Empriour of Almane the armes he weris,
As signifer souerane: And syne couth I se
Thre flour delycis of Fraunce, all of fyne gold,
In a feild of asure,
The thrid armes in honour,
The said persevant bure   That blourit so bold.

XXIX.

Tharwith lynkit in a lyng, be lerit men approvit,
He bure a lyon as lord, of gowlis full gay,
Maid maikles of mycht, on mold quhar he movit,
Riche rampand as roye, ryke of array:
Of pure gold was the ground, quhar the grym hovit,
[With dowble tressour about, flourit in fay;
And flour delycis on loft, that mony leid lovit,]
Of gowlis sygnit, and set, to schawe in assay;
Our souerane of Scotland his armes to knawe,
Quhilk sall be lord and ledar,
Our braid Brettane all quhar,
As sanct Mergaretis air,   And the signe schawe.

xxx.

Nert the souerane signe was sekirly sene,
That seruit his serenite euer seruable,
The armes of the Dowglas douchty bedene,
Knawin throw all Cristindome be conysance able;
Of Scotland the wer wall, wit ȝe but wene,
Our fais force to defend, and unfalȝeable;
Baith barmekyn and bar to Scottis blud bene,
Our lois, and our lyking, that lyne honorable.
That word is so wonder warme, and euer ȝit was,
It synkis sone in all part
Of a trewe Scottis hart,
Reiosand ws inwart   To heir of Dowglas.

xxxI.

Off the douchty Dowglas to dyte I me dres;
Thar armes of ancestry honorable ay,
Quhilk oft blythit the Bruse in his distres,
Tharfor he blissit that blud bald in assay.
Reid the writ of thar werk, to ȝour witnes,
Furth on my matir to muse I muse as I may.
The said persevantis gyde was grathit I ges,
Brusit with ane grene tre, gudly and gay;
That bure branchis on breid blythest of hewe;
On ilk beugh till embrace,
Writtin in a bill was,
O Dowglas, O Dowglas,   Tendir and trewe!

XXXII.

Syne schir schappyn to schawe, mony schene scheld
With tuscheis of trast silk tichit to the tre;
Ilk branche had the birth burly and beld,
Four flourist our all gretest of gre.
Ane in the crope heigh, as cheif I beheld,
Quhilk bure in till asure, blythest of ble,
Siluer sternis so fair; and part of the feld
Was siluer, set with ane hert, heirly and hie,
Of gowlis full gracious, that glemyt so gay:
Syne in asure the mold,
A lyoun crovnit with gold,
Of siluir ȝe se shold, To ramp in array.

XXXIII.

Quhilk cassyn be cognoscence quarterly was,
With barris of best gold it brynt as the fyr;
And vthir signes, forsuth syndry I ges,
Off metallis and colouris in tentfull atyr.
It was tyrefull to tell, dyte, or addres,
All thar deir armis in dewlye desyre.
Bot part of the principale neuertheles
I sall haist me to hewe hartlie but hyre.
Thar lois and thar lordschipe of sa lang dait,
That bene cot armouris of eild,
Tharin to harrald I held;
Bot sen thai the Brus beld, I wryt as I wait.

XXXIV.

In the takinnyng of treuth, and constance kend,
The colour of asure, ane hevinliche hewe,
For thi to the Dowglas that senȝe was send,
As lelest, all Scotland fra scaith to reskewe.
The siluer in the samyn half, trewly to tend,
Is cleir corage in armes, quha the richt knewe.
The bludy hart that thai bere the Brus at his end,
With his estate in the feid, and nobillis ynewe,
Addit in thar armes, for honorable caus,
As his tenderest and deir,
In his maist misteir;
As salbe said to thow heir In to schort sawis.

XXXV.

The roye Robert the Brus the rayke he awowit,
With all the hart that he had, to the haily graif;
Syne quhen the dait of his deid derfly him dowit,
With lordis of Scotland, lerit, and the laif,
As worthy, wysest to waile, in worschipe allowit,
To James lord 'of' Dowglas thow the gre gaif,
To ga with the kingis hart; thairwith he nocht growit;
Bot said to his souerane, So me God saif!
Ȝour gret giftis and grant ay gracious I fand;
Bot now it movis all ther maist,
That ȝour hart nobillast
To me is closit and cast, Throw ȝour command.

XXXVI.

I loue ȝou mair for that loiss ȝe lippyn me till,
Than ony lordschipe or land, so me our Lord leid!
I sall waynd for no wye to wirk as ȝe will,
At wis, gif my werd wald, with ȝou to the deid.
Thar with he lowtit full lawe: tham lykit full ill,
Baith lordis and ladyis, that stude in the steide.
Off commoun nature the cours be kynd to fulfill.
The gud king gaif the gaist to God for to reid;
In Cardros that crownit closit his end.
Now God for his gret grace,
Set his saull in solace!
And we will speike of Dowglace, Quhat way he couth wend.

XXXVII.

The hert cofflye he couth clos in a cler cace,
And held all hale the behest he hecht to the king:
Come to the haly graf, throw Goddis gret grace,
With offerandis, and vrisons, and all vthar thing;
Our Saluatouris sepultur, and the sampn place,
Quhar he rais, as we reid, richtuis to ryng;
With all the relykis raith, that in that roume was,
He gart hallowe the hart, and syne couth it hyng,
About his hals full hende, and on his awne hart.
Oft wald he kiss it, and cry,
O flour of all chewalry!
Quhy leif I, allace! quhy And thow deid art!

XXXVIII.

My deir, quoth the Dowglas, art thow deid dicht?
My singuler souerane, of Saxonis the wand!
Now bot I semble for thi saull with Sarazenis mycht,
Sall I neuer sene be into Scotland;
Thus in defence of the faith he fure to the fecht,
With knychtis of Christindome to kepe his command.
And quhen the batallis so brym, brathly and bricht,
War joyned thraly in thrang, mony thousand;
Amang the hethin men the hert, hardely he flang,
Said, Wend on, as thou was wont,
Throw the batell in bront;
Ay formast in the front, Thy fayis amang.

XXXIX.

And I sall followe the in faith, or feye to be fellit;
As thi lege man leile, my lyking thow art.
Thar with on Mahownis men manly he mellit,
Braid throw the battallis in bront, and bur thaim backwart.
The wyis quhar the wicht went war in wa wellit;
Was nane so stur in the steid micht stand him a start,
Thus frayis he the fals folk, trewly to tell it,
Aye quhil he couerit and come to the kingis hart,
Thus feile feildis he wan, aye worschipand it,
Throwout Cristindome kid
War the deidis that he did:
Till on a time it betid, As tellis the writ.

XL.

He bownyt till a batall, and the beld wan,
Our set all the sathanas syde Sarazenis mycht:
Syne followit fast on the chace, quhen thaj fle can,
Full ferly feile has he feld, and slane in the flicht.
As he relevit I wis, so was he war than,
Of ane wy him allane, worthy and wicht,
Circulit with Sarazenis, mony 'a' sad man,
That trauoyntit with a trayne apon that trewe knycht.
Thow sall nocht de the allane, quoth the Dowglas!
Sen I se the our set,
To fecht for the faith fete,
I sall devoid the of det, Or de in the place.

XLI.

He ruschit in the gret rowte, the knycht to reskewe,
Feile of the fals folk, that fled of befor,
Relevit in on thir twa, for to tell trewe,
That thaj war sampn ourset; tharfor I murn sore.
Thus in defence of the faith, as fermes ynewe,
And pite of the prys knycht that was in thore,
The douchty Dowglas is deid and adewe,
With los and with lyking, that lestis evir mor.
His hardy men tuke the hart syne vpon hand:
Quhen thaj had berpit thar lord,
With mekle mane to remord,
Thaj maid it hame be restord In to Scotland.

XLII.

Be this ressoun we reid, and as our Roy levit,
The Dowglas in armes the bludy hart beris;
For it, bled he his blud, as the bill brevit:
And in batallis full braid, vnder baneris,
Throw full chevalrus chance he this hert chevit,
Fra walyit wyis, and wicht, worthy in weris;
Mony galiard gome was on the ground levit,
Quhen he it slang in the feld, felloun of feris,
Syne reskewand it agane the hethin mennis harmes.
This hert red to behald,
Throw thir ressonis ald,
The bludy hart it is cald, In Dowglas armes.

XLIII.

The sternis of ane nothir strynd steris sa fair,
Ane callit Murray, the riche lord of renownis,
Deit, and a douchter had till his deir air,
Off all his tressour vntald, towris and townis:
The Dowglas in thaj dayis, douchty all quhar,
Archebald the honorable in habitaciounis,
Weddit that wlonk wicht, worthy of ware,
With rent and with riches; and be thaj ressonis
He bure the sternis of estait in his stele weidis;
Blyth, blomand, and bricht,
Throw the Murrayis micht:
And sa throw Goddis forsicht, The Dowglas succedis.

XLIV.

The lyon lansand on loft, lord in effeir,
For gud caus, as I ges, is of Gallaway.
Quhen thaj rebellit the crovne; and couth the king deir,
He gaif it to the Dowglas, heretable ay:
On this wys gif he couth wyn it on weir;
Quhilk for his souerane saike he set till assay;
Kelit dovne thar capitanis, and couth it conquir;
Maid it firme, as we fynd, till our Scottis fay.
Tharfor the lyoun he bure, with loving and lois,
Of siluer semely and sure,
In a field of asure,
Crovnit with gold pure, To the purpos.

XLV.

The forest of Ettrik, and vthair ynewe,
The landis of Lawdir, and lordschipis sere,
With dynt of his derf swerd, the Dowglas so dewe,
Wan wichtly of weir, wit the but weir,
Fra sonnis of the Saxonis. Now gif I sall schewe
The order of thar armis, it war to tell teir;
The barris of best gold that thaj hale knewe
It suld ws occupy all day; tharfor I end heir,
Referris me to harraldis, to tell ȝow the hale.
Of other scheldis, so schene,
Sum part will I mene,
That war on the tre grene, Worthy to wale.

XLVI.

Secund syne, in a feld of siluer, certane,
Of a kynde colour thre coddis I kend
With dowble tressur about, burely and bane,
And flour delycis so fair trewe till attend.
The tane and the tother of gowlis full gane,
He bure quarterly, maid that nane micht amend;
The armes of the Dowglas, thairof was I fayne;
Quhilk aft fandit with force, his fa till offend:
Of honorable ancestry thir armis of eld
Bure the erll of Murray,
As sad signe of assay,
His fell fais till affray, In a fair feild.

XLVII.

Ane nothir, erll of Ormond, also he bure
The said Dowglas armis, with a differens.
And richt so did the ferd, quhar he furth fure;
3aipe thocht he 3ong was, to faynd his offens.
It semyt that thaj sib war forsuth I assure.
Thir four scheldis of pryce in to presence
War chen3eit so cheualrus, that no creatur
Of lokis nor lynx, mycht lous worth a lence.
Syne ilk braunche, and beugh, 'bowit' thaim till:
And ilk scheld in that place
Thar tennend or man was,
Or ellis thar allyas, At thar awin will.

XLVIII.

All thir blesoun in the crope four helmes full fair,
And in thar tymeralis tryid, trewly thaj bere,
The plesand Powne in a part, provde to repair;
And als kepit ilk armes that I said eir,
The rouch Wodwys wyld, that bastounis bare,
Our growin grysly and growe grym in effeir;
Mair awfull in all thing saw I never air
Baith to walk, and to ward, as watchis in weir:
That terrible felloun my spreit afrayd,
So ferd full of fantasy,
I durst nocht kyth to opy
All othir armes thar by, Of renkis arayd.

XLIX.

Tharfor of the said tre I tell nocht the teynd,
The birth, and the branchis, that blomyt so brayd:
Quhat fele armes on loft, louely to lend,
Of lordingis and sere landis, gudly and glad,
The said persewant bure, quhar he away wend,
On his garment so gay, of ane hie haid,
I leif thaim blasonde to be with harraldis hende;
And I will to my first mater, as I eir maid:
And begyn, quhar I left, at lordingis deir,
The court of the Empriour,
How thaj come in honour,
Thir fowlis of rigour, With a gret reir.

L.

Than rerit thir Merlȝeonis that mountis so hie,
Furth borne bacheleris bald on the bordouris;
Busardis, and Beldkytis, as it mycht be,
Soldiouris and sumptermen to thaj senȝeouris.
The Pitill and the Pype Gled cryand pewewe
Befor thir princis ay past, as pert purviouris,
For thaj couth chewis chikinnis, and perches pultre,
To cleke fra the commonis, as kyngis caytouris;
Syne huke hover, and behald the herbery place.
Robyn Redbrest nocht ran,
Bot raid as a hensman;
And the litill we Wran That wretchit dorche was.

LI.

Thar was the haraldis fa the hobby but fable,
Stanchalis, steropis, strecht to thaj stern lordis,
With alkyn officeris in erd, awenand and able;
So mekle was the multitud no mynd it remordis.
Thus assemblit thir segis, syris senȝeourable,
All that war fowlis of reif, the richt quha recordis,
For the Temperalite tretit in table,
The stern Empriouris style thus staitly restord is.
The Pape, and the patriarkis, prelatis, I wiss,
Welcummit thaim wynly, but weir,
With haly sermonis seir,
Pardoun, and prayer, And blythly tham bliss.

LII.

The blissit Pape in the place prayit tham ilkane
To remayne to the meit, at the myddday;
And thaj grantit that gud, but gruching, to gane:
Than till a wortheliche wane went thaj thar way;
Past till a palace of pryce plesand allane,
Was erekit riallly, ryke of arrray,
Pantit and apparalit proudly in pane,
Sylit semely with silk, suthly to say.
Braid burdis, and benkis, ourbeld with bancouris of gold,
Cled our with clene clathis,
Railit full of richas,
The estast was arras That ȝe se schold.

LIII.

All thus thaj muse to the meit: and the merschale
Gart bring watter to wesche, of a well cleir:
That was the Falcoune so fair, frely but fale
Bad birnis burdis vp braid, with a blyth cheir.
The Pape passit till his place, in his pontificale,
The athill Empriour anone nechit him neir.
Kyngis, and patriarkis, kend with cardinalis hale,
Addressit thaim to that deis, and dukis so deir.
Bischopis bownis to the burd, and merschionis of mychtis;
Erllis of honouris,
Abbotis of ordouris,
Prowestis and priouris, And mony kene knychtis.

LIV.

Denys, and digniteis, as I eir dempt,
Scutiferis, and squyeris, and bachilleris blyth:
I pres nocht all to report; ȝe hard thaim expremit;
Bot all war merschalit to meit meikly and myth:
Syne seruit semely in saile, forsuth as it sempt,
With all curis of cost that cukis couth kyth.
In flesche tyme, quhen the fische war away flemyt,
Quha was stewart bot the Stork, stallwart and styth:
Syne all the lentryne but leis, and the lang reid,
And als in the adwent,
The Soland stewart was sent;
For he couth fro the firmament Fang the fische deid.

LV.

The Boytour callit was cuke, that him weile kend
In craftis of the ketchyne, costlyk of curis.
Many sawouris sals with sewaris he send,
And confectionis on force that phisik furth furis.
Mony man metis, gif I suld mak end,
It neidis nocht to renewe all thar naturis;
Quhar sic statis will steir, thar stylis till ostend,
ȝe wait all worschip and welth dayly induris.
Syne, at the myddis of the meit, in come the menstralis,
The Mavis and the Merle syngis,
Ostillis, and Stirlingis,
The blyth Lark that begynnis, And the Nychtingales.

LVI.

And thar notis anone, gif I richt newyne,
War of Mary the myld; this maner I wis;
Haile temple of the Trinite, crownit in hevin!
Haile moder of our maker, and medicyn of mys!
Haile succour and salf for the synnis sevyne!
Haile bute of our baret, and beld of our blis!
Haile grane full of grace that growis so ewyn!
Ferme our feid to the set quhar thi son is.
Haile lady of all ladyis, lichtest of leme!
Haile chalmer of chastite!
Haile charbunkle of cherite!
Haile! blissit mot thow be   For thi barne teme.

LVII.

Haile blist throw the bodword of blyth Angellis!
Haile princes that completis all prophecis pur!
Haile blythar of the Baptist, within thi bowallis,
Off Elizebeth thi ant, aganis natur!
Haile speciose most specifyit with the spiritualis!
Haile ordanit or Adam, and ay till indur!
Haile our hope, and our helpe, quhen that harme alis!
Haile alterar of Eua in ane but vre!
Haile well of our weilfair! we wait nocht of ellis;
Bot all committis to the,
Saull and lyf, ladye!
Now for thi frute make ws fre,   Fro fendis that fell is.

LXIII.

Fro thi gre to this ground lat thi grace glyde!
As thow art grantar tharof, and the gevar;
Now souerane quhar thow sittis, be thi sonis syd,
Send sum succour dovne sone to the synnir!
The fende is our felloune fa, in the we confide,
Thow moder of all mercy, and the menar.
For ws wappit in wo in this warld wyde,
To thi son mak thi mane and thi maker.
Now lady luke to the leid that the so lelle lufis,
Thow seker trone of Salamon,
Thow worthy wand of Aaron,
Thow joyus fleis of Gedion, Ws help the behufis.

LXIX.

All thus our lady thai lovit, with lyking and lyst,
Menstralis, and musicianis, mo than I mene may.
The psaltery, the sytholis, the soft sytharist,
The crovde, and the monycordis, the gittyrnis gay;
The rote, and the recordour, the ribupe, the rist,
The trumpe, and the talburn, the tympane but tray;
The lilt pype, and the lute, the fydill in fist,
The dulset, the dulsacordis, the schalme of assay;
The amyable organis vsit full oft;
Claryonis lowde knellis,
Portatiuis, and bellis,
Cymbaclanis in the cellis, That soundis so soft.

LX.

Quhen thai had songyn, and said, softly and schour;
And playit, as of paradys, it a poynt war;
In com japand the Ja, as a juglour,
With castis, and with cawtelis, a quaynt caryar:
He gart thaim se, as it semyt, in the samyn hour,
Hunting at herdis, in holtis so hair;
Sound saland on the se schippis of towr;
Bernes batalland on burde, brym as a bair;
He couth cary the cowpe of the kingis des,
Syne leve in the sted
Bot a blak bunwed;
He couth of a hennis hed   Make a mane mes.

LXI.

He gart the Empriour trowe, and trewly behald,
That the Corne Crake, the pundar at hand,
Had pyndit all his prys hors in a pundfald,
For caus thai ete of the corne in the kirkland.
He couth wirk wounderis quhat way that he wald:
Mak of a gray gus a gold garland;
A lang sper of a betill for a berne bald;
Nobillis of nut schellis, and siluer of sand.
Thus jowkit with juperdys the jangland Ja:
Fair ladyis in ryngis,
Knychtis in caralyngis,
Boith dansis and syngis;   It semyt as sa.

LXII.

Sa come the Ruke with a rerd, and a rane roch,
A bard owt of Irland with Banachadee!
Said, Gluntow guk dynyd dach hala mischy doch;
Raike hir a rug of the rost, or scho sall ryiue the.
Mich macmory ach mach mometir moch loch;
Set hir doune, gif hir drink; quhat Dele alis the?
O Deremyne, O Donnall, O Dochardy droch;
Thir ar his Irland kingis of the Irischerye:
O Knewlyn, O Conochor, O Gregre Makgrane;
The Schenachy, the Clarschach,
The Ben schene, the Ballach,
The Crekery, the Corach, Scho kennis thaim ilkane.

LXIII.

Mony lesingis he maid; wald let for no man
To speik quhill he spokin had, sparit no thingis.
The dene rurale, the Ravyn, reprovit him than,
Bad him his lesingis leif befor thai lordingis.
The barde worth brane wod, and bitterly couth ban,
How Corby messinger, quoth he, with sorowe now syngis;
Thow ischit out of Noyes ark, and to the erd wan,
Taryit as a tratour, and brocht na tythingis;
I sall ryiue the, Ravyne, baith guttis and gall.
The dene rurale worthit reid,
Stawe for schame of the steid.
The barde held a grete pleid In the hie hall.

LXIV.

In come twa flyrand fulis with a fonde fair,
The Tuchet, and the gukkit Golk, and ȝeid hiddy giddy;
Ruschit baith to the bard, and ruggit his hair;
Callit him thrys thevisnek, to thrawe in a widdy.
Thaj fylit 'him' fra the fortope to the fut thar:
The barde, smaddit lyke a smaik smorit in a smedy,
Ran fast to the dure, and gaif a gret rair;
Socht wattir to wesche him thar out in ane ydy.
The lordis leuch apon loft, and lyking thaj had,
That the barde was so het:
The fulis fonde in the flet,
And mony mowis at mete   On the flure maid.

LXV.

Syne for ane figonale of frut thaj straif in the steid;
The Tuchet gird to the Golk, and gaif him a fall,
Raif his taile fra his rig, with a rath pleid;
The Golk gat wpe agane in the gret hall,
Tit the Tuchet be the tope, ourtirvit his hed,
Flang him flat in the fyre, fetheris and all.
He cryid, Allace, with ane rair, revyn is my reid!
I am vngraciously gorrit, baith guttis and gall:
Ȝit he lap fra the lowe richt in a lyne.
Quhen thaj had remelis raucht:
Thaj forthocht that thaj faucht;
Kissit samyn and saucht,   And sat dovne syne.

LXVI.

All thus thir bathillis in hall heirly remanit,
With all welthis at wis, and worschipe to vale:
The Pape begynnis the grace, as greably ganit;
Wosche with thir worthyis, and went to counsall.
The pure Howlatis appele completly was planyt,
His falt and his foule forme, unfrely but faile:
For the quhilk, thir lordis in leid nocht to layne it,
He besocht of sucour, as souerane in saile,
That thaj wald pray Natur his prent to renewe;
For it was haile his behest,
At thar alleris requeſt,
Mycht dame Natur arreſt Of him for to rewe.

LXVII.

Than rewit thir riallis of that rath mane,
Baith Spirituale and Temperale, that kend the case;
And, considerand the caus, concludit in ane,
That thaj wald Natur beseike, of hir gret grace,
To discend that samyn hour as thar souerane,
At thar allaris instance, in that ilk place.
The Pape and the patriarkis, the prelatis ilkane,
Thus pray thaj as penitentis; and all that thar was.
Quhar throw dame Natur the traſt discendit that tyde,
At thar haile instance;
Quhom thaj ressaif with reuerens,
And bowsome obeysance, As Goddes and gyde.

LXVIII.

It nedis nocht, quoth Natur, to renewe oucht
Of ȝour entent in this tyde, or forthir to tell;
I wait ȝour will, and quhat way, ȝe wald that I wrocht
To reforme the Howlat, of faltis full fell,
It sall be done, as ȝe deme, dreid ȝe richt nocht:
I consent in this caise to ȝour counsall,
Sen my self for ȝour saike hiddir has socht,
Ȝe sall be specially sped, or ȝe mayr spell:
Now ilka foull of the firth a fedder sall ta,
And len the Howlat, sen ȝe
Off him haue sic pete;
And I sall gar thaim sampyn be   To growe or I ga.

LXIX.

Than ilk foule of his flicht a fedder has tane,
And lent to the Howlat in hast, hartlie but hone.
Dame Natur the nobillest nechit in ane;
For to ferme this federem, and dewly has done;
Gart it ground, and growe gayly agane,
On the sampyn Howlat, semely and sone.
Than was he schand of his schape, and his schroude schane
Off alkyn colour most cleir beldit abone;
The farest foule of the firth, and hendest of hewes;
So clene, and so colourlyke,
That no bird was him lyke,
Fra Burone to Berwike,   Under the hewes.

LXX.

Thus was the Howlat in herde herely at hicht,
Flour of all fowlis, throw fedderis so fair,
He lukit to his lykame that lempt so licht,
So propir plesand of prent, provde to repar:
He thocht him maid on the mold makles of mycht,
As souerane him awne self, throw bewte he bair,
Counterpalace to the Pape, our princis, I plicht;
So hiely he hyit him in Luciferis lair,
That all the fowlis of the firth he defowlit syne.
Thus leit he no man his peir;
Gif ony nech wald him neir,
He bad tham rebaldis orere, With a ruyne.

LXXI.

The pape, and the patriarkis, and princis of prow,
I am cummyn of thar kyn, be cosingage knawin;
So fair is my fetherem I haf no falowe;
My schrowde and my scheneweid schir to be schawin.
All birdis he rebalkit, that wald him nocht bowe;
In breth as a batall wricht full of bost blawin,
With vnloveable latis nocht till allow:
Thus wycit he the walentyne thraly and thrawin,
That all the fowlis with assent assemblit agane
And plenȝeit to Natur
Of this intollerable injur;
How the Howlat him bure So hie, and so haltane.

LXXII.

So pompos, impertinat, and reprovable,
In exces, our arrogant, thir birdis ilkane
Besocht Natur to ces that unsufferable.
Thar with that lady a lyte leuch hir allane:
My first making, quoth scho, was unamendable,
Thocht I alterit, as ȝe all askit in ane,
Ȝit sall I preif ȝow to pleis, sen it is possible.
Scho callit the Howlat in haist, that was so haltane:
Thy pryde, quod the Princess, approchis our hie,
Lyke Lucifer in estaite;
And sen thow art so elate,
As the Ewangelist wrait, Thow sall lawe be.

LXXIII.

The rent, and the ritches, that thow in rang,
Was of othir mennis all, and nocht of thi awne;
Now ilk fowle his awne fedder sall agane fang;
And mak the catif of kynd, till him self knawin.
As scho has dempt thaj haf done thraly in thrang.
Thar with dame Natur has to the hevin drawin:
Ascendit sone, in my sicht, with solace and sang.
And ilk fowle tuke the flicht: schortly to schawin,
Held hame to thar hant, and thar herbery:
Quhar thaj war wont to remane,
All thir gudly ar gane;
And thar levit allane, The Howlat and I.

LXXIV.

Than this Howlat hidowis of hair and of hyde,
Put first fra poverte to pryce, and princis awne per;
Syne degradit fra grace, for his gret pryde,
Bannyt bitterly his birth, bailefull in beir:
He welterit, he wrythit, he waryit the tyde,
That he was wrocht in this warld wofull in weir:
He crepillit, he crengit, he carfully cryd,
He solpit, he sorowit, in sighingis seir.
He said, Allace! I am lost, lathest of all,
Bysyn in baile best,
I may be sampill heir eft
That pryde neuer ȝit left His feir, but a fall.

LXXV.

I couth nocht won in to welth wretch 'that I' wast,
I was so wantoun of will, my werdis ar wan;
Thus for my hicht I am hurt, and harmit in haist,
Cairfull and caytif for craft that I can:
Quhen I was hewit as heir all thir hieast,
Fra rule, ressoun, and richt redles I ran;
Tharfor I ly in the lyme, lympit, lathast:
Now mark ȝour mirour be me, all maner of man,
Ȝe princis, 'prelattis' of pryde for penneis and prowe,
That pullis the pure ay,
Ȝe sall syng as I say,
All ȝour welth will away, Thus I warn ȝow.

LXXVI.

Think how bair thow was borne, and bair ay will be,
For oucht that ledis, of thi self in ony sessoun;
Thy cude, thy claithis, nor thi cost, cummis nocht of the,
Bot of the frute of the erd, and Godis fusoun:
Quhen ilk thing has the awne, suthly we se,
Thy nakit cors bot of clay, a foule carioun,
Hatit, and hawles; quhar of art thow hie?
We cum pure, we gang pure, baith king and commoun.
Bot thow reule the richtuis, thi rovme sall orere.
Thus said the Howlat on hicht:
Now God for his gret micht,
Set our sawlis in sicht　　Of sanctis so sere!

LXXVII.

Thus for ane Dow of Dunbar drew I this Dyte,
Dowit with ane Dowglas; and boith war thai dowis:
In the forest forsaid, frely parfyte,
Of Terneway, tendir and tryde, quho so trast trowis.
War my wit as my will, than suld I wele wryte;
Bot gif I lak in my leid, that nocht till allow is,
Ȝe wyse, for ȝour worschipe, wryth me no wyte:
Now blyth ws the bliss barne, that all berne bowis
He len ws lyking and lyf euerlastand!—
In mirthfull moneth of May,
In myddis of Murraye,
Thus on a tyme be Terneway, Happinnit HOLLAND.

Heir endis
The Buke of the Howlat.

'Scriptum'
Per 'manum' M. Joannis Alloan.

The Appendix.

APPENDIX.

It has not been thought necessary to point out such differences betwixt the two manuscript copies of the HOWLAT, as consist merely of variations in the orthography; unless when they happen to give the passage a more intelligible aspect.

Stanza I. l. 3, 'The blemes;' by adopting this reading, the line would signify that 'the flowers, or blossoms fairest of colour, glanced with the rays of the sun.' See Dr Jamieson's Dictionary.—l. 7, 'the seasoun.'

The four last lines of this stanza, in Bannatyne's MS. are as follows; along with the same as they occur in Pinkerton's edition, which will serve as a specimen of its general inaccuracy:—

Bann. MS.	*Pink. Edit.*
Thus, throw the cliftis so cleir,	Thus throw the *clifts* so *clere*
Alone, but fallow or feir,	*Above,* but fallow or *fere,*
I raikit till a reweir	I *waikit* till a reweir
That ryally reird.	That ryallye *rered.*

St. II. l. 1. 'or rove;' l. 3. 'that brym,' and 'above;' l. 5, 'love was;' l. 7. 'coud hove;' l. 12, 'als was blyth.'

St. III. l. 3, 'all mennis;'‡ l. 6, 'maistres;' l. 7, 'nedis;' l. 10, 'ane uthir.'

St. IV. l. 1, 'in that place;' l. 2, 'peteous;'‡ l. 3, 'sowplit in;' l. 8, 'nycht in ane;' l. 13, 'a gowlyne.'‡

St. V. l. 2, 'hedand and;' l. 3, 'my face;'‡ l. 4, 'fetherein;' l. 6, 'I waik;'‡ l. 9, 'the fowlis;'‡ l. 13, 'to my deid.'

St. VI. l. 2, 'skirp me;' l. 4, 'a besum;' l. 6, 'till accuse in this caus.'‡—'accuse' has been substituted instead of 'agus,' which is the reading in Asloan's MS.—l. 7, 'mak me amendis.'

St. VII. l. 5, 'mansueit and demure;' l. 6, 'and schaud;'‡ l. 10, 'violent of vyce.'

St. VIII. l. 1, 'quhen that;' l. 3, '.ave.;' l. 8, 'speciallie.'

St. IX. l. 3, 'byssym;' l. 6, 'to ask helpe;' l. 11, 'mak.'

St. x. l. 2, 'bot of Natur;' l. 5, 'prophetis oure lerit all the lawe;' l. 8, 'papingo proude.'
St. xii. l. 1, 'quhat sall;' l. 2, 'thir letteris;' l. 7, 'of kirk.'
St. xiii. l. 2, 'Phesandis;'‡ l. 3, 'presentit tham;' l. 12, 'ding.'
St. xv. l. 3, 'chertouris;' l. 4, 'clethis of hair;' l. 5, 'at all houris.'
St. xvi. l. 1, 'enterit that bure;' l. 9, 'a cunnand.'
St. xvii. l. 2, 'Drake;'‡ l. 4, 'correcter of;' l. 6, 'men of law;' l. 7, 'ruch ran.'‡
St. xviii. l. 12, 'a curate.'‡
St. xix. l. 11, 'thar coming.'‡
St. xx. l. 3, 'the foull.'‡
St. xxi. l. 2, 'sen thai the richt;'‡ l. 5, 'the mater, the maner.'
St. xxii. l. 2, 'and syne to the.' The two last words are wanting in Asloan's MS.—l. 10, 'that Spirituale.'
St. xxiii. l. 1, 'heir tauld.'
St. xxiv. l. 2, 'hufe thai;' l. 7, 'till thai.'
St. xxv. l. 4, 'secound;' l. 6, 'percying the;'‡ l. 9, 'fermyt on fold.'
St. xxvi. l. 3, 'of mycht;' l. 5, 'Spark Halkis; l. 8, 'circulit with.'
St. xxvii. l. 1, 'be conscience;' l. 2, 'clene gold;' l. 3, 'plant till;' l. 6, 'the gem and rubyis inrold.'
St. xxviii. l. 1, 'secound;' l. 13, 'that blenkit.'‡
St. xxix. l. 4, 'ryell of array;' l. 6 and 7, these two lines are entirely omitted in Asloan's MS.
St. xxxi. l. 3, 'in distres;' l. 12, the second 'O' does not occur in Bann. MS.
St. xxxii. l. 2, 'ticht to;' l. 9, 'full gay;' l. 12, 'se schold.'
St. xxxiii. l. 5, 'it wer lere for to tell.'
St. xxxv. l. 1, 'to rayk;' l. 6, 'thay the gre;'‡ l. 10, 'all thir.'‡
St. xxxvi. l. 3, 'no way.'
St. xxxvii. l. 4, 'orisons.'‡
St. xxxviii. l. 5, 'than in;' l. 7, 'and blicht;' l. 10, 'as thow wont.'‡
St. xxxix. l. 1, 'or with fays be;'‡ l. 9, 'thus fell;' l. 11, 'deidis he did.'
St. xl. l. 2, 'set on the;' l. 4, 'slane in ficht;' l. 5, 'relevit was;' l. 6, 'ane wycht;' l. 7, 'mony a sad;'‡ l. 13, 'in this.'
St. xli. l. 2, 'fell of;' l. 6, 'the pretius knycht that was in pane thore;' l. 7, 'deid doun adewe;' l. 10, 'bureit thair.'
St. xlii. l. 7, 'galiard grome;' l. 9, 'reskewand agane the.'
St. xliv. l. 3, 'caus the king;' l. 5, of weir;' l. 6, 'soueranis;'‡ l. 7, 'his capitanis.'
St. xlv. l. 5, 'of Saxonis;' l. 7, 'thocht I thame hale knewe;'‡ l. 8, 'suld occupy us all;' l. 9, 'referring.'‡
St. xlvi. l. 4, 'trewly to tend;' l. 6, 'quarterly, that;' l. 8, 'quhilk oft was fayn.'‡
St. xlvii. l. 7, 'changit so.'

St. XLVIII. l. 1, 'Als hieast;' l. 3, 'in a port;' l. 5, 'the rouch busteous bair;' l. 7, 'saw I nevair;'‡ l. 8, 'wechis;' l. 10, 'so feidfull.'
St. XLIX. l. 1, 'the tend;' l. 4, 'in feir landis;' l. 6, 'off his;' l. 8, 'to my mater.'
St. L. l. 1, 'Merlionis;' l. 4, 'subject men;' l. 5, 'cryand pewé;' l. 6, 'as pairt of;' l. 13, 'that wretchit dwerch was.'‡
St. LI. l. 6, 'quha richtly recordis;' l. 9, 'the prelatis;' l. 10, 'thame wysalie.'
St. LII. l. 12, 'wes the arras.'‡
St. LIII. l. 7, 'cardinalis all.'
St. LIV. l. 1, 'as are;' l. 9, 'but les.'
St. LV. l. 3, 'sawouris sawce;'‡ l. 4, 'of force;'‡ l. 5, 'mane metis;' l. 8, 'welth and worschip.'
St. LVI. l. 1, 'in ane;'‡ l. 5, 'and salue.'‡
St. LVII. l. 1, 'bod wird;' l. 8, 'altare;' l. 13, 'fra feindis.'
St. LVIII. l. 12, 'flece of.'
St. LIX. l. 1, 'thai lofe;' l. 7, 'the cithill;' l. 8, 'dulset and;' l. 11, 'Portatisis;' l. 12, 'Symbaclanis.'
St. LX. l. 1, 'a schour;' l. 4, 'with cantelis;' l. 13, 'a man.
St. LXI. l. 2, 'Corncraik;' l. 3, 'poyndit;' 'pryndfald;' l. 4, 'becaus thai;' l. 9, 'jupceis.'
St. LXII. l. 3, 'dynydeach;' l. 4, 'ryve;' l. 5, 'Misch makmory ach mach mountir;' l. 8, 'are the,' and 'the Erchrye.'
St. LXIII. l. 5, 'barde wox;' l. 8, 'as tratour;' l. 9, 'rywe;' l. 10, 'than the dene rurale worth reid.'
St. LXIV. l. 2, 'the Tuquheit;' l. 5, 'fylit him.'
St. LXV. l. 3, 'fra his heid;' l. 9, : lycht in lyne;' l. 12, 'kissit syne.'‡
St. LXVI. l. 1, 'athillis;' l. 9, 'present to.'
St. LXVII. l. 2, 'that kennit;'‡ l. 8, 'penitent.'
St. LXVIII. l. 4, 'to reasoun;' l. 8, 'or I mair;' l. 11, 'haue pete.'
St. LXIX. l. 2, 'lent the;' l. 4, 'federein;' l. 5, 'and gane;' l. 7, 'was the;' l. 12, 'fro Byron.'
St. LXX. l. 7, 'with the Pape;' l. 12, 'rebaleis.'
St. LXXI. l. 2, 'consignage;' l. 3, 'fetherein;' l. 8, 'viciit;' l. 13, 'so hautane.'
St. LXXII. l. 1, 'impertinax;' l. 4, 'that with that lady allyt;' l. 8, 'hautane.'
St. LXXIII. l. 4, 'till thy self;'‡ l. 8, 'and schortly;'‡ l. 9, 'and to;' l. 11, 'and gane.'
St. LXXIV. l. 4, 'bailfully;' l. 8, 'and sorowit;' l. 10, 'bysym.'
St. LXXV. l. 1, 'wretch wayest;' l. 2, 'in will;' l. 5, 'was of hewit;' l. 7, 'the lathest;'‡ l. 8, 'mek zour;' l. 9, 'prelettis of pryde.‡ Asloane's MS. has 'prencis,' or 'princis,' repeated.
St. LXXVI. l. 3, 'claithis, thi cost;' l. 7, 'hafles;' l. 11, 'thy gret.'
St. LXXVII. l. 4, 'Terway;' l. 6, 'gif lak;' l. 12, 'thus in.'

In the above list, I have put a mark (‡) to such of the readings as seem to be preferable to those in Asloan's manuscript, although they have not been adopted. Notwithstanding all the vigilance made use of to make the text as accurate as possible, the following *errata* require to be corrected. If any others should have likewise escaped, I flatter myself that they are not of much importance.

St. XVI. l. 5, ' Thai war,' *read* ' Thai mak.'—St. XXII. l. 6. ' Emperour;' this word, which is contracted in the MS. in this, and in one or two other places, should have been printed ' Empriour.'—St. XXXIV. l. 8, ' Estate,' *read* ' Estatis.'—St. XLV. l. 7, ' That thai,' *read* ' Thocht I thaim.'—St. 46, l. 8, ' Aft,' *read* ' Oft;' l. 9, ' Armis, *read* ' Armes.'—St. XLVII. l. 9, ' bowit,' dele the inverted commas.

St. I. *In the myddis of May.*—Beyond all question, the most extensive and singular specimen of alliterative composition in the English language, is the *Visions of Piers Plowman*, which Fame has ascribed to Robert Langland, who flourished about the year 1370, and who, by the bye, is claimed as a native of Scotland, by David Buchanan, one of our older biographical writers, in his unpublished treatise *De Scriptoribus Scotiæ illustribus*. Much curious information concerning alliterative verse is contained in the preface to the splendid edition of the Visions, by the late Dr Whittaker. But I need not enlarge on a subject on which so much has been said; nor attempt to point out the motives which led authors, at successive and different times, to adopt this favourite practice of bringing together, (in the words of Sir Philip Sidney,) " *Rimes Running in Rattling Rowes.*"

In reference to the alliterative style of the HOWLAT, Mr George Chalmers, in the preface to his elaborate edition of Sir David Lyndsay's Works, says, " If it be inquired, by what artifices of composition the poets of these times sacrificed common sense to far-fetched conceits, they will be found in two sources; their desire of alliteration, and their passion for antiquated phraseology. In obtaining the first object, they searched for words having the same prefixes, without any analogy of sense; and in quest of the last, they went beyond the old English, into the Anglo-Saxon speech, as they found it in vulgar use. *They thus sacrificed sense to sound, and facility to facture.*"—Not so, however, according to Holofernes, in Love's Labour's Lost; who, in his " ex-

temporal epitaph" on the "Death of the Deer," says, "I will something affect the letter, (that is, I will practise alliteration; and, gentle reader, pray mark the reason)—for *it argues facility*."

St. v.—The complaint of this melancholy bird, as Mr Alexander Thomson, in his MS. remarks on this poem, has observed, is not like that of the Owl in Gray's Elegy, complaining to the moon

"Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign"—

But rather resembles that of Shakespeare's Richard, when descanting on his own deformity.

St. xiii.–xix.—In these stanzas, the different birds belonging to the State Temporal, with their several dignities, are minutely described. "Some ingenuity," as Sir Walter Scott, in a MS. note, observes, "is displayed in selecting the points of connection betwixt the particular species of birds, and the ranks and orders assigned to each. The author has anticipated Dryden, who describes the Catholic clergy, on account of their early and vigilant church service, under character of 'the bird which warned Saint Peter of his fall'—for Holland informs us,

'The Cok in his cler cap that crawis and cryis,
Was chosyn Chantor.'

The mendicant friars are slily described under the guise of

'Crying Crawis and Cais that cravis the corn.'

—The solitary Heron is a contemplative Chartreux. Extensive notes," Sir Walter adds, "might be written on this part of the poem;" which, however, the editor will not at present attempt.

St. xix. l. 4, '*Se fowle and seid fowle*.'—Chaucer also speaks of "Water-foulis" and "Seed-foulis"—In his poem, the "Assemblie of Foulis," all the birds are gathered before the "noble Goddesse, Nature, on St. Valentine's Day, to choose their makes;" but before proceeding to mention their names, the poet separates them in the following manner:—

"This noble Empresse, full of all grace,
Bad every foule take her own place,
As they were wont alway, fro yere to yere,
On Sanct Valentine's day, standen here.

That is to saie, the foules of rauine
Were highest set, and then the foules smale
That eaten, as that Nature would encline

As worme or thing, of which I tell no tale
But water foule, sate lowest in the dale;
And foules that liueth by sede, sat on the grene,
And that so many, that wonder was to sene."

St. XXVII.—The armorial bearings described in this and some of the following stanzas, might receive some illustration from the Register of Armes, by Sir David Lyndsay of the Mount, lately published from the original manuscript. The description of the arms of the "Empriour of Almane," by our author, corresponds to those of the "Empriour of Rome," by the Lord Lyon King at Arms, who has in the same manner blazoned the armorial bearings of the Earl of Douglas; of Douglas, Earl of Murray; and of Douglas, Earl of Ormond; but with *some differens*, which it is unnecessary in this place to be at the trouble of pointing out.

St. XXIX.—As descriptive of the Royal Arms of Scotland, I may copy a passage from a small tractat of the Scots Original, preserved in Asloan's manuscript, which the reader may compare with the corresponding passage in Fordun.—*Scotichronicon*, Vol. I. p. 47.

"Then the Kingis son, callit to name Fergus Ferherd, gadderit gret power of Scottis men, and come out our Scotland maior, or Ireland, in less Scotland, and tuke the crowne of it, and was our first king, and brocht the armes of Scotland. The quhilkis remaynis zit—ane Red rampand Lyoun, in a scheld of gold; viz.

Albion in terris rex primus germine Scotis
Illorum turmis rubri tulit arma leonis,
Fergusius fulvo Ferherd rugientis in aruo.
Liliger ille leo rosidus nunc pingiter auro
Christum tercentis terdenes prefuit annis."—*Fol.* 95.

The following extract presents the subject in a more ludicrous point of view, being indeed taken from one of those exaggerated satirical accounts of our country, in which the English people, even to a later period than the times of Swift or of Churchill, seem to have delighted themselves, as affording them a vent to their national antipathy. "The arms of the kingdom was anciently a Red Lyon Rampant in a field of gold; but *An. Dom.* 787, they had the augmentation of the double tressure, for assisting the French King; but his Majesties arms in *Scotland* is a mere *Hysteron Proteron*—the pride of the people being such, as to place the *Scots* arms in the dexter quarter of the escutcheon, and make the unicorn the dexter supporter, with the thistle at his heel, with a suitable motto—'*Nemo me impune lacesset*,' true enough; whoever deals with them, shall be sure to smart for't: The thistle was wisely placed there, partly to shew the fertility of the country—Nature alone producing plenty of these gay flowers—and partly as an emblem of the people; the top thereof having some colour of a flower, but the bulk and substance of it is only sharp and poysonous pricks."—*A Modern Account of Scotland*, 1679, 4to, p. 3.

St. XXIX.—The latter lines of this stanza are very curious, and have been considered as a prophetick enunciation of the Union of the crowns of Scotland and England, about a century and a half before that event was accomplished in the person of James VI. A curious prediction of this kind is detailed in Bishop Spotiswood's History.

St. XXX.—The history of the Douglasses, during the time of our author, offers much curious and important matter of enquiry, had this been a suitable place for entering on the subject. The fate of William, Eighth Earl of Douglas, has been alluded to in the preface. His brother and successor, James, after the discomfiture at Arkinholm, in 1455, and the forfeiture of his title and estates, (Acta Parl. vol. II. p. 42 and 75,) which immediately followed, retired to England, where he long lived in retirement, without any further attempt to disturb the publick tranquillity. At length, however, in the year 1483, he was induced to make an excursion into his native land, when he was taken prisoner, and sentenced by James the Third to be confined in the Abbey of Lindores—a fate which he met with great resignation; observing, "*He that may no better be, must be a Monk.*" He entered in holy orders—having, as it is said, been brought up in his youth with a view to church preferment—and died there, 15th April, 1488. His epitaph may be seen in *Crawfurd's Peerage*, p. 59.

St. XXX. l. 5.—Bellenden, in his translation of Hector Boece's Croniklis, uses the same term of commendation, when speaking of "the illuster surname of Dowglas, quhilkis," he says, "war evir the sicker targe and *weirwal* of Scotland aganis Inglismen; and wan many landis be thair singular manheid and vassalage;" he afterwards adds, that "sen that surname was put down, Scotland has done few vailyhent dedis in England."—*fol.* CCX. Godscroft repeats these words whilst vindicating that family from the charges usually made against them:—"Truely," he says, "if we shall speake without partiality, their greatnesse was so usefull to their king and country, that *Hector Boetius* stickes not to say, the *Douglasses* were ever the sure buckler and warre-wall of Scotland, and wonne many lands by their singular manhood and vassalages; for they decored this realme with many noble acts, and by the glory of their martiall deeds."—p. 207.

St. XXXII.—If we reject the notion of the poem containing a satire on King James II., it might the more readily admit of a doubt, whether it was not written previous to the death of Earl William, in 1452, since the manner in which the *then* Earl of Douglas is spoken of, seems to be equally applicable to either of the brothers. The probability, however, is in favour of what is elsewhere stated at sufficient length: otherwise the author most assuredly would not have limited the *green-tree* of Douglas to *four* branches; and it would have been a most inexcusable oversight in Holland, when describing the members of that family, to which he appears to have been so much attached, and mentioning the younger brothers so particularly, had he passed over in silence the *second* brother, and the presumptive heir of succession to the earldom.

St. XXXV.-XLI.—In some respects, Holland, in the Episode contained in these stanzas concerning the 'gud Schir James,' or, as he is sometimes called, 'the Black Douglas,' has greatly exceeded his illustrious predecessor, the Archdeacon of Aberdeen, with whose metrical history of the Bruce, he was evidently acquainted. Several lines might be quoted, with which there is too close a similarity to suppose it to have been merely accidental. On this subject, Wyntown, the Prior of Lochlevin, is remarkably concise; contenting himself with referring his readers to Barbour. There was no great loss sustained, probably, in his so doing; as it is not likely that he would have added anything to the interest of his predecessor's narrative. After telling us, that in 1320, King Robert lay in *lang sicknes* in Cardross, and that his body was interred in the Kirk of Dunfermline, he merely adds,

> "And gud Jamys of Dowglas
> His Hart tuk, as fyrst orderyd was
> For to bere in the Holy Land.
> How that that wes tene on hand,
> Well purportis Browsys buk,
> Quhay will tharof the matere luke."

St. XLIII.—Since writing the preface, I observe that "Archibaldus Moraviæ Comes," appears as one of the witnesses to a publick deed, 28th June, 1445. —(*Acta Parl.* vol. II. p. 59.) The earliest mention of him under that title, which I had then discovered, was in the curious paper, of date, 25th August, 1447, printed by Hay of Drumboote, (in his Vindication of Elizabeth More; Edin. 1723, 4to, p. 65, &c.) determining the priority of birth in favour of James, over Archibald, who, it appears, were twin-brothers; in which Sir James is designated as "of Heriotmuir;" and his brother is expressly called "Archibald of Douglas, Erle of Murrawe." The succession was thus amicably adjusted, in the event that, "gif it sall happen the said [William] Lord Erle, to decesse withoutyn ayrs of his body lauchfullie to be gottin."—The name of Archibald, Earl of Murray, is again mentioned, in 1449, as one of the conservators of a truce with England.—(*Rymeri Foedera*, XI. 253, &c.) But the former deed is sufficient to shew that the marriage was celebrated as early as 1445. From Godscroft we learn that it was subsequent to the death of the Earl of Murray, the father of the lady. There is usually a sad want of dates in ascertaining such minute points of history.

St. XLIV.—The name of the Earl of Ormond occurs likewise among the witnesses in the deed above referred to, in June 1445. The title therefore must have been conferred on him not long after his brother, the Earl of Douglas, had gained the ascendancy in matters of state.

St. XLIV. l. 3, '*And richt so did the ferd.*—On the margin of Bannatyne's MS., opposite these words, is affixed the name of "Lord Balveny;" younger brother, as here described, of the Douglasses.

St. LIX.—Lord Hailes, who speaks of the Howlat as a verbose work, adds, that it must have merit with antiquaries, from the stanzas describing "the kyndis of instruments, the sportaris, (jugglers,) the Irish bard, and the fulis." Many of the musical instruments here mentioned, are likewise named by Gawin Douglas, in his Palice of Honour. His words are,

"In modulatioun hard I play and sing
Faburdoun, priksang, discant, countering,
Cant organe, figuratioun, and gemmell;
On croud, lute, harp, with mony gudlie spring;
Schalmes, clariounes, portatiues, hard I ring,
Monycord, organe, tympane, and cymbell,
Sytholl, psalterie, and voices sweet as bell," &c.
Edit. Edin. 1579, p. 14.

St. LX.–LXI.—The wonderful exploits of the juggler here described may remind some readers of the curious stanza, in Douglas's Palice of Honour, of a similar nature; where the author says,

"The Nigromansie thair saw I eik anone,
Of Benytas, Bongo, and Freir Bacone,
With mony subtill point of Juglairy;
Of Flanders peis maid mony precious stone,
Ane greit laid sadill of a siching bone,
Of ane nutemug thay maid a Monk in hy,
Ane paroche kirk of ane penny pye:
And Benytas of ane mussill maid an aip,
With mony uther subtill mow and jaip."
Edit. Edin. 1579, p. 56.

St. XLII.—"One is naturally arrested by the character of the Irish Bard, who breaks in at the banquet like a sturdy beggar, reciting in alternate lines the Irish gibberish by which he proposed to deserve entertainment; and expressing in English his coarse and unmannerly wants and demands. The jargon he speaks is too much corrupted, I fear, to be intelligible."—*Manuscript Note by Sir W. Scott.*

If such was the usual conduct of the strolling bards in those days, we need not be much surprised in finding them classed with *sornaris*, sturdy beggars, and other *misterfull* men, who were denounced as vagrants, and proceeded against accordingly. There is an Act of Parliament in the year 1449, against *bardis*, or "ony that *makis thaim fulis* that *ar nocht bardis*, or sic lik vtheris rynaris aboute."—(*Acta Parl.* Vol. II. p. 36.)

In this stanza, as the writer of the manuscript critique on the poem has observed, "there are some lines wholly Irish, which have as uncouth and forbid-

ding an appearance, as the scene in the Punic or Carthaginian language, which Plautus has inserted in one of his comedies.—(*Poenulus*, Act. v. Sc. 1.)"

St. LXLIV.—"The order of the entertainment is given very correctly; and may be considered as a picturesque delineation of a banquet of the period. There is first a religious hymn to the Virgin; then a vocal and instrumental concert; then the deceptions and tricks of a juggler or conjuror; then the intrusion of the Irish bard, with behaviour as rude as his dialect—his combat with the two professed fools—and the fight of the two fools or jesters with each other—all of which were amusements peculiar to the period. In paintings of the older schools, we often see such strange associations as persons of quality feasting at the high *dais*, while beggars attend in the porch, and dwarfs and jesters are gamboling or fighting on the floor."—*Manuscript Note by Sir W. Scott.*

St. LXVIII.—"If nothing more were meant by the Owl, than the bird commonly so called, I should scarcely think the improvement of his form, what the critics call a *Dignus Vindice Nodus*, a cause of sufficient importance to warrant the introduction of such a *Prosopopœia* as Nature."—*Manuscript Critique*, &c. p. 12.

St. LXXVI. l. 9.—In a note to the preface, (p. 2,) the false reading of THY CROWNE in Pinkerton's edition is taken notice of; as on these words part of the strength of his argument is founded. But except in one other instance, I have not thought it necessary to trouble either the reader or myself in pointing out the errors which have crept into that edition of the Howlat; which, indeed, without any sort of exaggeration, might perhaps be termed the most inaccurate copy of any old Scotish poem which has in our days been submitted to the publick. The blame, however, (it is but just to remark,) does not rest with the editor, who, in this, as well as in other instances, was obliged to trust to persons who were not very competent to the task.

In the conclusion to the preface, a curious passage in Blind Harry's Wallace, alluding to the Howlat, is given; and it is rather singular, that the comparison which is there made use of, should have been adopted from so fabulous a writer by our old historian, John Major, whose words again have been re-echoed by subsequent writers.—*Historia, etc. Paris*, 1521, fol. LXXI.

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